

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
January 9 - 16, 2014

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1. [Kerry on Upcoming Syria Conference](#) (01-16-2014)

Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry, Washington, D.C.

SECRETARY KERRY: Good morning, everybody. Good afternoon. And let me just say that I know you'd like to ask some questions, and unfortunately I have to go straight from here over to the White House for a meeting, but I will have an availability tomorrow in the morning when we have our friends from Mexico here, and I'll take a couple of extra questions to make up for not being able to answer some here now.

I know that many of you have been asking about some of the recent revisionism as to why the international community will be gathering in Montreux next week, so let me make it clear here today.

From the very moment that we announced the goal of holding the Geneva conference on Syria, we all agreed that the purpose was specifically and solely to implement the 2012 Geneva I communique. That purpose, that sole purpose, could not have been more clear at the time this was announced and it could not be more clear today. It has been reiterated in international statement after international statement that the parties have signed up to, and venue after venue, in resolution after resolution, including most recently in Paris last weekend when both the London 11 and the Russian Federation reaffirmed their commitment to that objective, the implementation of Geneva I.

So for anyone seeking to rewrite this history or to muddy the waters, let me state one more time what Geneva II is about: It is about establishing a process essential to the formation of a transition government body – governing body with full executive powers established by mutual consent. That process – it is the only way to bring about an end to the civil war that has triggered one of the planet's most severe humanitarian disasters and which has created the seeding grounds for extremism.

The Syrian people need to be able to determine the future of their country. Their voice must be heard. And any names put forward for leadership of Syria's transition must, according to the terms of Geneva I and every one of the reiterations of that being the heart and soul of Geneva II, those names must be agreed to by both the opposition and the regime. That is the very definition of mutual consent.

This means that any figure that is deemed unacceptable by either side, whether President Assad or a member of the opposition, cannot be a part of the future. The United Nations, the United States, Russia, and all the countries attending know what this conference is about. After all, that was the basis of the UN invitation send individually to each country, a restatement of the purpose of implementing Geneva I. And attendance by both sides and the parties can come only with their acceptance of the goals of the conference.

We too are deeply concerned about the rise of extremism. The world needs no reminder that Syria has become the magnet for jihadists and extremists. It is the strongest magnet for terror of any place today. So it defies logic to imagine that those whose brutality created this magnet, how they could ever lead Syria away from extremism and towards a better future is beyond any kind of logic or common sense.

And so on the eve of the Syrian Opposition Coalition general assembly meeting tomorrow to decide whether to participate in Geneva in the peace conference, the United States, for these reasons, urges a positive vote. We do so knowing that the Geneva peace conference is not the end but rather the beginning, the launch of a process, a process that is the best opportunity for the opposition to achieve the goals of the Syrian people and the revolution, and a political solution to this terrible conflict that has taken many, many, many, too many lives.

We will continue to push in the meantime for vital access for humanitarian assistance. I talked yesterday with Russian Federation Foreign Minister Lavrov in an effort to push still harder for access to some areas where the regime played games with the convoys, taking them around a circuitous route instead of directly in the way that the opposition had arranged for and was willing to protect them in. It is important that there be no games played with this process.

We will also continue to fight for ceasefires where we could achieve them, and we will continue to fight for the exchange or release of captive journalists and aid workers and others in order to try to improve the climate for negotiations.

Now, obviously, none of this will be easy. Ending a war and stopping a slaughter never is easy. We believe, though, this is the only road that can lead to the place where the civilized world has joined together in an effort to lead the parties to a better outcome. And to the Syrian people, let me reiterate: The United States and the international community will continue to provide help and support, as we did yesterday in Kuwait, where we pledged \$380 million of additional assistance in order to try to relieve the pain and suffering of the refugees.

We will continue to stand with the people of Syria writ large, all the people, in an effort to provide them with the dignity and the new Syria which they are fighting for. Thank you. And as I said, I'd be happy to answer questions tomorrow. Thanks.

2. U.S. Urges Syrian Political Solution, Ups Aid to Refugees (01-15-2014)

Washington — U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry announced another increase in humanitarian aid January 15 to help millions of people displaced by the three-year-old Syrian civil war.

This latest commitment made at a donors' conference held in Kuwait City brings U.S. support to \$1.7 billion. The United States is the leading donor attempting to provide relief for more than 4 million people in Syria and more than 2 million refugees who have fled to neighboring countries.

The new funding of \$380 million will be allocated among Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iran and Egypt. These nations are all hosting some part of the refugee population in camps, in communities or with families.

"We also want to make sure that these nations are able to keep their hospitals and their schools up and running, their economies growing," said Kerry as he announced the increased U.S. aid on the fringes of the U.N.-sponsored donor meeting.

Kerry also expressed concern for more than 1 million children displaced in the course of the war. The United Nations reports that at least 3 million children have dropped out of school as the conflict disrupts normal life. U.S. aid will be targeted to make sure that children receive medical care and are able to continue their schooling.

Increased assistance can help relieve suffering and address needs in the short term, but pressing for a political solution to the violence remains the most important goal, Kerry said.

"We really need to undo the underlying cause of the creation of those refugees," Kerry said in remarks to reporters. The Geneva II process is a multilateral initiative in motion since 2012 to attempt to forge a political solution. Participants in those talks are set to reconvene on January 22, and Kerry hinted that Syria may concede to "a ceasefire in whatever number of places that might be able to be achieved," an action that would lend "a more positive climate" to the talks, Kerry said.

The U.S. secretary of state also said, "The refusal of humanitarian access by both the regime and elements of the opposition is an outrage." He recounted reports from humanitarian agencies about being barred from reaching needy populations by armed groups. The denial of assistance in this way is "an affront to human dignity," he said.

Offering more specifics about the aid package, Kerry said the largest single share — almost \$180 million — will be directed to people still inside Syria in need of medical care, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene. Many U.N. and nongovernmental agencies have staff at work on the ground to deliver those commodities and services, including the U.N. Refugee Agency, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and others.

Beside Syria itself, Lebanon is among the nations most seriously affected by the influx of refugees. With a population of just over 4 million, Lebanon has absorbed more than 850,000 refugees, according to the U.N. Refugee Agency. The newest U.S. relief funding directs almost \$80 million to Lebanon to help with the ongoing distribution of millions of blankets, mattresses and winter clothing.

Jordan is to receive about \$60 million, according to a State Department fact sheet issued January 15. A particular concern for children's well-being and education has gained U.S. attention in Jordan, and the new support will help families in which children have been taken out of school and put to work to ease family hardships.

The U.N. Refugee Agency reports that about 400,000 Syrians are living in established refugee camps. Turkey is hosting 21 camps, and about \$30 million of the newly announced U.S. aid will be directed to needs there. Twelve camps in Iraq will receive U.S. funding.

News reports indicate the Kuwait City meeting ended with donor nations making new commitments of more than \$1.5 billion in assistance for the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

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[Kerry at Syria Donors' Conference](#)

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[Facts on U.S. Humanitarian Aid for Syrian Crisis](#)

3. Hagel Honors Johnstone for Work on U.S.-Japan Issues (01-14-2014)

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14, 2014 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and former Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Ryozo Kato presented the ambassador's namesake prize to Pentagon Asia policy expert Christopher Johnstone in honor of his contributions toward strengthening U.S.-Japanese relations.

"We're here to honor Chris Johnstone ... for his dedication to strengthening U.S.-Japanese relations, in particular, the U.S.-Japan Alliance," Hagel said.

Hagel was joined by the current Japanese ambassador to Washington Kenichiro Sasae as Johnstone, accompanied by his wife, Mikiko, was recognized for his dedication to the two nations.

"Everyone in this room has done an awful lot to strengthen that alliance over your careers and your lives," Hagel said. This group understands this recognition as well as anyone, he said.

The Kato Prize was created in 2008 to honor the career and spirit of Ambassador Kato when he retired as Japan's U.S. ambassador. Kato was recognized for inspiring a generation of Japanese and American officials with his persistent and patriotic commitment to building a stronger alliance.

Johnstone's award credited him with playing a central role in launching the bilateral defense guidelines review, navigating the tensions in the East China Sea, and achieving new progress on bilateral plans to realign U.S. forces on Okinawa and in the Western Pacific.

During the ceremony, Hagel noted Kato's affinity for quoting former Secretary of State George Schultz.

"Shultz once said that working with allies is a lot like gardening," Hagel said. "It requires constant attention, constant effort."

"Chris Johnstone has proven himself to be an exceptional gardener all his career, and especially here at DOD since he arrived in 2010," Hagel said.

“Everyone who works on Asia policy at DOD -- and some are here -- know that Chris has played a critical role in helping this alliance grow, and this alliance strengthen and deepen,” Hagel said.

The defense secretary said when the outside policy community recognizes someone that is making a difference “that’s something very special.”

“It represents the real-world impact of Chris’s quiet determination to strengthen our alliance since he first visited Japan more than 20 years ago.” “Over the last four months, Chris’ efforts have yielded significant and tangible progress,” he added.

Hagel pointed to the first 2+2 meeting between U.S. and Japanese ministers and secretaries of state and defense which were held in Japan as part of that progress.

“We announced that for the first time since 1997, we’ll be revising the guidelines for U.S.-Japan defense cooperation.” The most significant milestone achieved so far, Hagel said, is in the realignment of U.S. forces on Okinawa which happened when the landfill permit for the Futenma Replacement Facility was approved.

“All of this serves as a very clear demonstration that the U.S.-Japan Alliance can handle complex and difficult problems that might otherwise prevent us from effectively dealing with 21st century security challenges,” Hagel said.

“And it would not have been possible without Chris’s leadership, his persistence, his hard work, and his gardening,” he added.

The defense secretary also highlighted a note he received from the U.S. Ambassador to Japan Carline Kennedy “extending her congratulations” to Johnstone.

““We appreciate Chris’s dedication to the U.S.-Japan Alliance, including his steadfast work on the 2013 2+2 joint statement,”” Hagel quoted. ““Chris, your commitment and example is an inspiration to all ‘alliance managers,’ and we look forward to continuing to work alongside you in the future.””

Hagel expressed his gratitude to Johnstone for his “indispensable role in helping take the U.S.-Japan relationship to the next level.”

“We are all grateful for your service, and we are all very proud of your accomplishments,” he said. “And I appreciate the support you have provided me, as you have other leaders of this institution over the years.”

“We all wish you much continued success, and to Mikiko,” Hagel said. “And we thank you.”

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[Speech Delivered by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel During Ambassador Kato Award Ceremony](#)

4. Obama, Kerry Discuss Negotiations with Iran (01-13-2014)

By Merle David Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — Secretary of State John Kerry says the international community has taken “a critical, significant step” toward reaching a resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

At the same time, the international community will provide Iran with limited and targeted relief from the most stringent economic sanctions it has imposed, Kerry said. The relief will be phased in to match Iran's efforts to meet its commitments.

Beginning January 20, for the first time in almost a decade, Iran's nuclear program will not be able to advance, and some of its program will be rolled back, Kerry said January 12. Iranian negotiators and representatives from six nations led by the European Union agreed to a six-month plan that will open the way to a more complete agreement to end concerns about Iran's program, he added.

"Iran will voluntarily take immediate and important steps between now and January 20 to halt the progress of its nuclear program," Kerry said in a prepared statement. The plan was agreed to initially during negotiations in Geneva in November 2013.

Iran has agreed to limit its enrichment of uranium to no more than 5 percent by not installing or starting up additional centrifuges or using next-generation centrifuges. The 5 percent enrichment level is considered the standard level for electric-power generation. Coupled with that commitment is a commitment to permit new and more frequent inspections of Iran's nuclear sites by inspection teams from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify that Iran is meeting its commitments.

Kerry said Iran will also continue to render its entire stockpile of 20 percent-enriched uranium unusable for further enrichment. He added that the international community will remain vigilant in the verification of Iran's actions.

"Taken together, these and other steps will advance our goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon," President Obama said in a separate statement.

Obama also said that "in return, over the next six months the United States and our P5+1 partners — the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia and China, as well as the European Union — will begin to implement modest relief so long as Iran fulfills its obligations and as we pursue a comprehensive solution to Iran's nuclear program."

At issue is Iran's uranium-enrichment program, which the international community has long believed was part of a program for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, though Iranian officials have claimed the enrichment processing has been for use in a medical-research reactor and for electric-energy generation.

As a consequence, the United Nations, the United States and the international community have imposed a series of political and economic sanctions against Iran.

"Unprecedented sanctions and tough diplomacy helped to bring Iran to the negotiating table, and I'm grateful to our partners in Congress who share our goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," Obama said. Some members of Congress have in recent months proposed additional sanctions, but the administration has asked that no further legislative actions be taken until the current negotiations could be completed.

"The \$4.2 billion in restricted Iranian assets that Iran will gain access to as part of the agreement will be released in regular installments throughout the six months," Kerry said. But the next phase poses the greater challenge, Kerry said, and that involves reaching a final and comprehensive agreement that will resolve outstanding concerns by the international community about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

It has been the stated goal of the United States and its allies to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, which would threaten regional stability in the Middle East. But the United States has equally been adamant about negotiating a diplomatic resolution to the disagreement, Kerry said.

In September 2013, Obama welcomed efforts by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the opening of the U.N. General Assembly to renew the six-nation talks and reach an accord on inspections by IAEA monitors.

The rapid meeting schedule in October and November that resumed after Obama and Rouhani spoke by telephone in September was an effort to ensure that the pace of the work proceeded quickly but cautiously, a senior U.S. official told journalists.

5. Obama on Implementation of First Step Agreement on Iran Nuclear Program (01-12-2014)

Statement by the President on the Implementation of the First Step Agreement on the Islamic Republic of Iran's Nuclear Program

Today's agreement to implement the Joint Plan of Action announced in November marks the first time in a decade that the Islamic Republic of Iran has agreed to specific actions that halt progress on its nuclear program and roll back key parts of the program. Beginning January 20th, Iran will for the first time start eliminating its stockpile of higher levels of enriched uranium and dismantling some of the infrastructure that makes such enrichment possible. Iran has agreed to limit its enrichment capability by not installing or starting up additional centrifuges or using next-generation centrifuges. New and more frequent inspections of Iran's nuclear sites will allow the world to verify that Iran is keeping its commitments. Taken together, these and other steps will advance our goal of preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

In return, over the next six months the United States and our P5+1 partners -- the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China, as well as the European Union -- will begin to implement modest relief so long as Iran fulfills its obligations and as we pursue a comprehensive solution to Iran's nuclear program. Meanwhile, we will continue to vigorously enforce the broader sanctions regime, and if Iran fails to meet its commitments we will move to increase our sanctions.

Unprecedented sanctions and tough diplomacy helped to bring Iran to the negotiating table, and I'm grateful to our partners in Congress who share our goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. Imposing additional sanctions now will only risk derailing our efforts to resolve this issue peacefully, and I will veto any legislation enacting new sanctions during the negotiation.

With today's agreement, we have made concrete progress. I welcome this important step forward, and we will now focus on the critical work of pursuing a comprehensive resolution that addresses our concerns over Iran's nuclear program. I have no illusions about how hard it will be to achieve this objective, but for the sake of our national security and the peace and security of the world, now is the time to give diplomacy a chance to succeed.

6. Kerry Update on P5+1 Agreement with Iran on Nuclear Program (01-12-2014)

Statement by Secretary Kerry: Update on P5+1 Negotiations with Iran

We've taken a critical, significant step forward towards reaching a verifiable resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

On January 20, in just a few short days, we will begin implementation of the Joint Plan of Action that we and our partners agreed to with Iran in Geneva.

As of that day, for the first time in almost a decade, Iran's nuclear program will not be able to advance, and parts of it will be rolled back, while we start negotiating a comprehensive agreement to address the international community's concerns about Iran's program.

Because of the determined and focused work of our diplomats and technical experts, we now have a set of technical understandings for how the parties will fulfill the commitments made at the negotiating table. These understandings outline how the first step agreement will be implemented and verified, as well as the timing of implementation of its provisions.

Iran will voluntarily take immediate and important steps between now and January 20 to halt the progress of its nuclear program. Iran will also continue to take steps throughout the six months to live up to its commitments, such as rendering the entire stockpile of its 20% enriched uranium unusable for further enrichment. As this agreement takes effect, we will be extraordinarily vigilant in our verification and monitoring of Iran's actions, an effort that will be led by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The United States and the rest of our P5+1 partners will also take steps, in response to Iran fulfilling its commitments, to begin providing some limited and targeted relief. The \$4.2 billion in restricted Iranian assets that Iran will gain access to as part of the agreement will be released in regular installments throughout the six months. The final installment will not be available to Iran until the very last day.

While implementation is an important step, the next phase poses a far greater challenge: negotiating a comprehensive agreement that resolves outstanding concerns about the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear program.

As the United States has made clear many times, our absolute top priority in these negotiations is preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. We have been clear that diplomacy is our preferred path because other options carry much greater costs and risks and are less likely to provide a lasting solution.

We now have an obligation to give our diplomats and experts every chance to succeed in these difficult negotiations. I very much appreciate Congress' critical role in imposing the sanctions that brought Iran to the table, but I feel just as strongly that now is not the time to impose additional sanctions that could threaten the entire negotiating process. Now is not the time for politics. Now is the time for statesmanship, for the good of our country, the region, and the world.

We are clear-eyed about the even greater challenges we all face in negotiating a comprehensive agreement. These negotiations will be very difficult, but they represent the best chance we have to resolve this critical national security issue peacefully, and durably.

7. State Dept. Summary of International Space Exploration Forum (01-10-2014)

On January 9, representatives from over 30 countries [1] met at the Department of State for the International Space Exploration Forum, and released the following Forum Summary.

Representatives of nations from around the globe met in Washington, DC, on January 9, 2014, at the International Space Exploration Forum (ISEF) to further advance the exploration and utilization of space and to highlight their direct benefit to humankind. This ISEF meeting continued the dialogue initiated by the European Commission and the European Space Agency, and most recently held in Italy in November 2011, which underscored the importance of space exploration, and its benefit to all citizens of the world. As host of the ISEF, the United States expressed its strong commitment to advance space exploration and urged all nations to join together to extend humanity's reach into the solar system.

ISEF participants noted that space exploration represents the ultimate challenge in our quest to explore new frontiers and expand our collective sense of humanity's place in the universe. All participants confirmed that innovation and knowledge derived from space exploration directly contribute to economic growth and societal well-being.

Discussions highlighted that many of the spaceflight achievements of the past half-century would not have been possible without international cooperation. Competition-driven innovation at the industrial and scientific levels is also an important element for the evolution of space exploration. Currently, working together, nations are successfully leveraging their strengths and executing multiple robotic and human space missions with broad societal benefits. Nations are coordinating efforts to better understand our planet and to expand our reach to a variety of solar system destinations, including asteroids, the Moon, and Mars. Nations participating in the ISEF recognized that human and robotic space exploration generates benefits for people on Earth and will be most successful by building on accomplishments and expanding partnerships with the long-term goal of human exploration of Mars. ISEF participants also noted the importance of policy-level commitment for realization and sustainable implementation of international endeavors in space exploration.

ISEF participants supported the work of space agencies participating in the International Space Exploration Coordination Group (ISECG) in developing a strategic roadmap for human space exploration documented in the 2013 Global Exploration Roadmap released in August. They welcomed an expansion of efforts to increase synergies between human and robotic missions to maximize the unique contribution made by each and their collective contribution to common goals. They recognized the value of the stepwise approach to exploration, enabling nations to demonstrate advanced space exploration capabilities through cooperative international missions which allow individual national priorities to be met while achieving shared long-term goals. They encouraged broadened participation in ISECG from additional space agencies.

As part of this common vision for space exploration, ISEF participants recognized the importance of the International Space Station (ISS) as the largest, most complex international scientific and engineering project in history. In addition to the benefits of continuing research, technology demonstrations, and experimentation, the ISS partnership illustrates that nations can collaboratively design, fund and complete an expansive and complex project. In light of the research that has been conducted by more than 80 nations, the ISS partners encouraged expanded international access to this unprecedented facility, and noted its continuing value to future exploration endeavors. ISEF participants acknowledged the need to continue making concrete steps fostering international cooperation for additional space exploration projects, programs and activities.

ISEF participants recognized the growth in commercial spaceflight activities. Such private sector efforts expand economic growth, bring new vitality and ideas, and enhance space exploration. ISEF participants emphasized the importance of commercial spaceflight in exploration activities in accordance with existing national and international guidelines.

ISEF participants acknowledged that the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) is an important venue in which spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations alike can continue to discuss important issues regarding expanding humanity's horizons in space and furthering the objectives of the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space. These globally important issues include the long-term sustainability of the space environment for all users, and protecting Earth from potentially hazardous objects. With the participation for the first time by a number of developing countries in space exploration, ISEF also recognized the value of space activities in promoting sustainable development. ISEF participants noted the need for discussion of international frameworks and common principles for collaboration on future space exploration, drawing on the experience of projects such as the ISS.

The ISEF participants welcomed an offer from Japan to host the next space exploration dialogue in 2016 or 2017 and agreed that policy level consultations should continue in the interim until the next meeting. They committed to convey the results of the ISEF to various stakeholders within their respective governments.

[1] Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Commission, European Space Agency, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Vietnam, International Academy of Astronautics, and the United States

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